



# Military Police in Korea



## Transform Provost Marshal Operations

*By Lieutenant Colonel Chad B. McRee*

*An armistice ending the Korean War was signed in July 1953, and since then, US military police have served in Korea alongside Republic of Korea (ROK) military police, Korean National Police (KNP), and other police organizations on the peninsula. From that time, military police in Korea have adapted to the requirements of the war that faces them just 40 miles from Seoul. Even in the 21st century, they have continued to adjust as requirements change. Now more than ever, technology can be leveraged, the capabilities of our force have been enhanced, and the ROK-US alliance continues to strengthen. As a result, change is positively received.*

The interesting lineage of the 8th Military Police Brigade recently changed once again. On 19 December 2003, the ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the commander of the United Nations Command (UNC)–Combined Forces Command (CFC), signed a document establishing the Combined Forces Command Provost Marshal Office and appointing the US Forces Korea Provost Marshal as the permanent provost marshal of the CFC. What this means to the 8th Military Police Brigade is that its commander is the first Combined Provost Marshal (CPM) and that he and his successors will wear four hats—those of the CPM, the Joint Provost Marshal, the 8th US Army Provost Marshal, and the commander of the 8th Military Police Brigade.

The move to establish a CPM was attempted unsuccessfully several times. Beginning in June 2002, the Operations Division of the US Forces (Joint) Provost Marshal Office once again began the painstaking process to establish an essential requirement for police responsibilities in Korea. After 18 months of staffing, briefings, rewrites, and hundreds of pages of Korean translations, the job was finally completed. This was a monumental transformation for the military police in Korea and may serve as an example for other military police headquarters throughout the world in peaceful and hostile environments alike. The Military Police Corps can take pride in knowing that the UNC/CFC commander and the ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have enough trust in the US Army military police to make the Army component military police commander the first CPM.

This new arrangement will allow the CPM to leverage the KNP and give him immediate access to ROK military police forces. While most CPM activities

will occur within the Operations Division of the Provost Marshal Office, this access to ROK military police will greatly assist the three other directorates of the Joint Provost Marshal—the Law Enforcement Division, Status of Forces Agreement Support Division, and Security Division. These divisions will have the advantage of tapping into the CPM's expertise to aid in their daily missions for US Forces Korea and increase the impact of their actions as those forces transform and adjust to the changing environment.

The CPM's office now includes the following ROK personnel: a military police lieutenant colonel who serves as the ROK deputy provost marshal, a military police major who serves as the ROK operations chief, a naval military police lieutenant serving as the ROK plans officer, a military police administrative clerk, and a military police noncommissioned officer equivalent to a sergeant first class. Coupled with a



**US General Leon LaPorte, UNC/CFC commander, and General Kim Jong Hwan, ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sign the document paving the way to establishing the post of the CPM.**

nearly mirror image on the US side of the Operations Division, this directorate has been tasked with the following:

- The first official writing of the Combined Forces Provost Marshal Annex that will accompany the UNC/CFC war plan.
- The reengineering of ROK-US military police roles and functions.
- The integration of ROK military police support to noncombatant evacuation operations that had previously been a US-only operation.

While writing an annex seems simple, it required enormous coordination, in-depth understanding of military police functions and capabilities, and a thorough understanding of the war plan. ROK armed forces have 42 divisions and 10 corps. Each division and corps has military police organizations that must be tracked and monitored during a fight. Considering that the Korean peninsula is only the size of Rhode Island and that several US and coalition organizations would also join the fight, terrain management would be difficult. If estimates are correct, ROK and US military police will have their hands full with enemy prisoners of war (EPWs), refugees, and civilian internees and an enormous follow-on stabilization and security requirement.

In the near term though, daily armistice requirements keep the Operations Division and the CPM busy with anti-American demonstrations (see

*MILITARY POLICE*, September 2003, pages 20-23), ROK-US combined military police training events, visits by heads of state to the CFC, and the continuous preparation for the possibility of war. One recent development that added to the CPM establishment is the realignment and transformation of the ROK army Military Police Corps. On 5 January 2004, the ROK Provost Marshal General signed the directive to transform the corps and align its functions and missions with those of the US Army Military Police Corps. Effective 1 April 2004, the ROK military police began providing the full complement of military police battlefield functions to the ROK army—law and order, maneuver and mobility support, area security, police intelligence, and reengineered internment and resettlement of EPWs operations.

Given the old adage about change (“Serving in Korea for 50 years, one year at a time”), this type of transformation is not only new, but is a welcome and extraordinary event. While change in Korea and in the US Army has always been considered a difficult task, it is not impossible. The leadership of both the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff and US Forces Command saw the value of building a combined military police operation in Korea. With any combined operation, especially one with a language obstacle, this type of arrangement can be initially overwhelming. However, the results will undoubtedly have positive, lasting results for ROK armed forces, US Forces Korea, and the US Department of Defense.